



Polish Profiles

Jan Henryk De Rosen

By: **Kaya Mirecka Ploss**, Ph.D., Executive Director
Jan Karski Institute, Baltimore, MD

Sometimes instead of attending the Sunday Mass at "Our Lady Queen of Poland" parish, I drive all the way across Washington to the National Shrine, next to Catholic University. I go there to look in admiration at the beautiful stained glass windows, but mostly to look at that marvelous mosaic "Christ in Majesty".

Jan Henryk De Rosen, who did both the stained glass windows and the majestic mosaic of Jesus Christ, was mostly known before the Second World War as the artist who the Vatican chose in 1932 to restore the chapel at Castelgandolfo, the Holy Father's summer residence.

The name De Rosen sounds foreign, but the man was very Polish and has a long and interesting family background. The Rosen's father was the court painter to Tsar Alexander II and to Tsar Nicolas II. His great aunt was none other than the beautiful Angelica Kaufman, who was the great love of the German poet Goethe. Jan De Rosen's great-grandmother was Mary Weaver, an English woman who was a relative of the well known English painter Thomas Weaver.

Jan De Rosen himself was born in Warsaw, Poland in the year 1891. In his formative years he lived with his parents in France. When World War I broke out in 1914 he volunteered into the Polish Army in France organized by Colonel Teofil Sarzyński that fought under the command of General Jozef Haller. After the war he returned to Poland.

His first major works were the beautiful murals in the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów, then the renovations of the Pope's Chapel. Afterwards came the Sobieski chapel in Kahlenberg, Vienna, where the Polish King prayed before the last battle with the Turks.

In 1937 Count Jerzy Potocki, the Polish Ambassador to the United States, invited De Rosen to Washington. When the war broke out in 1939 De Rosen's return to Poland became impossible. During the war years, De Rosen, who had a Doctorate in Humane Letters, taught Liturgical Art for five years at Catholic University in Washington.

Already before World War II, art critics called De Rosen the greatest living liturgical artist of the 20th century, but he showed his great artistry here in the United States. He was also very personable, with intensely piercing blue eyes. I had the privilege to know him personally. Though he was 24 years older than Professor Jan Karski, they were close friends and I met De Rosen through Jan Karski. I also have in my home a lovely little painting given to me by De Rosen and a birthday present given to me by Jan Karski, which Karski bought in 1945 at an estate sale in Washington at the urging of Jan De Rosen. Supposedly the painting is a Bronzino, a very well known early 18th century Italian painter. A painting worth a lot of money. Maybe so. I never had it appraised or investigated. I don't want to be disappointed. I want to believe the painting is a real Bronzino.

Jan De Rosen always pictured Christ as young in his murals and mosaics. A Christ with a strong personality, never meek or self effacing. I once asked De Rosen about it. His answer surprised me, yet it made sense. "I see Christ as someone who performed miracles, who traveled with adoring followers. I see His stoical bearings in face of torture and crucifixion. Besides, there is no psychological description of Christ in the Bible," he added. "Each one of us will see Christ differently."

How right he was! Rosen brought his own vision of Christ in images he created in his mosaics, murals and stained glass windows.

In Washington alone, there are four pieces of Rosen's art. The giant mosaic of Christ at the National Shrine is the most outstanding one, truly a sight to behold. As one walks into the main church where everyone is awestruck by the great figure of the seated Christ. He looks young, strong, regal and glorious. Each time that I pray before it I feel uplifted, stronger, and ready to face every obstacle in my life. This mosaic of Christ is the largest in the world of a single seated Christ, and contains 4,000 shades of color. Then there is the altar-mural at the St. Joseph chapel in the National Cathedral called "The Entombment of Christ", also a mural at St. Agnes Episcopal Church, and a beautiful mosaic at the Catholic St. Matthew Cathedral.

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Heifer had a little farm

By: **Justyna Ball**

Five bucks may not buy much these days. But if you put your mind to work, you may come up with an idea of how to use it to the fullest. Like putting several kids and babcia in your car, and driving to the nearest Heifer farm. Because that's how much it would cost you to enter (per car) its 260 acres, and to be provided with an entire day's worth of entertainment for the whole bunch.

I spent last weekend there entertaining others. For a few years now, my family has been volunteering proudly representing Poland at Heifer's Global Village. We cover one event in June and the harvest festival in October.

For those unfamiliar with the project, Heifer's primary mission, when created, was to breed animals and distribute them all over the world in areas where livestock is most needed. These days, rather than being shipped, the animals are bought in the country to help the economy and save on transportation.

Until now, Poland was one of these places, although as a member of the EU, it's probably less and less dependent on Heifer. The headquarters of the Carpathian region are based in Warsaw. We can trace every Polish family in the Podkarpacie area that received a sheep or a goat.

When communism fell, the new government was preoccupied with the more or less important problems while many farmers had a hard time surviving the new reality. Heifer came to the rescue. Then when in the 90s, some farmers lost their animals due to floods, Heifer reached out to them as well.

The foundation's goals of "working with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the Earth" go beyond its boundaries. Poland is an example where the political situation plays no role. There will always be someone left out. The part that I like the most is that people do not just receive an animal, but they learn to share it (by giving away the firstborn) with others and the "gift of giving" continues...

It all started with Dan West, an American relief worker who distributed powdered

milk to the children of Spain during the Spanish Civil War when he realized that, "These children don't need a cup, they need a cow." To make a long story short, heifer cows were picked, because they were young and the families who received them were obligated to give a female offspring to another family in the village and so on.

Look through the pages of the online catalog and you will discover that, that for example, \$150 buys you a llama, \$20 will get you a share of it, or you may pay \$30 for the gift of honeybees. Water buffalo may not be appreciated in Slovakia nor a camel in Romania, but it will make some, let's say Filipino family, very happy. And look at the benefits! It is used for power for planting rice and potatoes, for milk, its manure for fertilization but also for ... fuel. And all it eats is the grass that is not "suitable for harvesting." How cool is that?!

The farm located in Rutland, MA, is an education site and is open to the public for a variety of events throughout the year. Locals from neighboring churches visit, as well as busloads from as far as New York. Volunteers either live on the farm, like students from Texas or Mexico and some even from Poland) and others only come for the event, from states like Vermont or New Hampshire.

My own first encounter took place when a Heifer representative came to my local senior center with the slide show on Ukraine. Someone suggested that I set up a Polish display to introduce Poland alongside. And I'm glad that I came, because the slide show showed no distinction between Poland and Ukraine, so at first I just rolled my eyes, sighed, and then decided to put my foot in the door to see what I can do to improve understanding of other cultures (mainly the Polish culture).

It turned out that Heifer hosts an annual International Fair where countries like Ghana, Kenya, Guatemala, China, Chile, Mexico represent areas of the organization's posts. The United States is represented by Maine, and Poland covers Central and Eastern Europe.

I found out that the so-called Global Village was a camp-like setting of tents and clay huts spread out in the woods, and from whatever your site was, you could barely see another. On hot summer days your only access was through a dusty narrow road, which on rainy days, the path turned muddy.

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Calendar of Events

To Jan 4, A Blessing to One Another: Pope John Paul II and the Jewish People, Exhibition at Getty Gallery, Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049. Info at www.skirball.org

**To Jan 21, 2009, Santa Ana - All The World's a Stage, Modjeska' Arden at Old Courthouse Museum., 211 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Info: at (714) 973 6605
www.ocparks.com/oldcourthouse**

29 - Dec 5, Polish Heroes: Those Who Rescued Jews (Opening reception: October 29, 5 - 7 p.m.), exhibition at Hillel at Stanford University. Info: (650) 736-1199.

31, Fri, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. The Lady and the Star: How Modjeska Conquered late Nineteenth Century America, Old Courthouse Museum, 211 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Santa Ana: Reservation are required (714)973-6610.

Nov 1, Sat, 10:00 a.m. - noon or 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.; Helena Modjeska and the California Dream, Arden, The Helena Modjeska Historic House; Res. are required (714) 973-6610.

8, Sat, 5:00 pm. Polka Night - The Polish Club of Laguna Woods. Info: (949) 206 9122.

9, Sun, 12:30 pm. Polish American Congress Meeting in Yorba Linda, Pope John Paul Center Info: (626) 577-9797.

10, Mon, 19:30; A Concert & Awards Ceremony Honoring 90 Years of Poland's Independence, Symphonic and film music by Wojciech Kilar, the 2008 Paderewski Lecturer; Midnight Winds and USC Strings with Sharon Lavery, conductor. Bovard Auditorium, USC. Info: (310) 442-8500, ext 109 and www.usc.edu/dept/polish_music

13 - 16, Thu to Sun, Paderewski Festival, Paso Robles, CA, Concerts, memorabilia exhibits, film screening, Polish Mass and breakfast, Lecture on Paderewski and other attractions. Festival Gala Concert given by the Russian-born pianist Nikita Mndoyants on November 15 at 8 pm., Info. and res: (805) 239-4437. and www.paderewskifest.com.

15, Sat, from 7 p.m. Gala Muzyki Dance, led by Konio at the Parish Hall, 3424 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, Tickets \$35 per person. Info and res: at (310)396-2165

16, Sun, 2:00 p.m. Annual Meeting of the Friends of John Paul II Foundation in Southern California at 3424 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, Info: at (626) 281-0516.

29, Sat, Andrzejki Dance sponsored by PNA-ZNP Group 3259 "Piast", at Polish Center of John Paul II, 3993 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda Info: Greg at (714) 744-2775.

Dec 7, Sun, 1:30 pm. Oplatek - luncheon and Awards Banquet sponsored by the Polish American Congress - Our Lady of the Bright Mount church hall in LA. Award recipients... Frank Kosowicz, Posthumous Awards Zbigniew Janczur and Henry Silka Advance reservations are necessary. More info on page 8...: Info: (626) 577 9797.

13, Sat, 5:00 pm. Christmas Celebration, Clubhouse7, Polish Club of Laguna Woods, Infor: (949) 206 9122.

14, Sun, Nativity Play & Christmas Eve Dinner by the Polish School at the Polish Center of John Paul II, 399 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda, CA; Info: (760) 863-5302.

31, Wed, New Year's Eve Dance, Pope John Paul II Polish Center, 3999 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda, CA, Info: (760) 863-5302.

Please send information for the calendar to Bish Petryka - e-mail: zbyskoopet@aol.com ★